



Prison Registers in Institutions And Organisations

Prisons were often in old buildings, such as castles. They tended to be damp, unhealthy, insanitary and over-crowded. All kinds of prisoners were mixed in together, men, women, children; the insane; serious criminals and petty criminals; people awaiting trial; and debtors. Each prison was run by the gaoler in his own way. He made up the rules. If

you could pay, you could buy extra privileges, such as private rooms, better food, more visitors, keeping pets, letters going in and out, and books to read. If you could not, the basic fare was grim. You even had to pay the gaoler to be let out when your sentence was finished.

Law and order was a major issue in Victorian Britain. Victorians were worried about the huge new cities that had grown up following the Industrial Revolution – how were the masses to be kept under control? They were worried about rising crime. They could see that transporting convicts to Australia was not the answer and by the 1830s Australia was complaining that they did not want to be the dumping-ground for Britain's criminals.

Discovering your ancestor in prison records doesn't necessarily make them a hardened criminal, nineteenth century law was harsh and children as well as adults were imprisoned for minor misdemeanours. These records are often very detailed and can include physical descriptions of height, weight and eye colour.

Accused - Herbert Barry

Victim - John Henry Wills

| Accused | Surname | Given Names | Age | Trade or Occupation | Degree of Instruction |
|--|------------------|-------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| | Barry | Herbert | 25 | Fireman | |
| Alias | Berry or Thomson | | Date of Birth | | Place of Birth |
| | | | Year | Date | |
| | | | 1887 | | Frome, Somerset |
| Physical Description | | | | | |
| Height | Complexion | Hair | Eyes | Affliction | Marks, Tattoos or Scars |
| 5' 10½" | Fresh | Brown | Blue | Deaf | Horseshoe, woman's head &c. on right arm; snake, dagger & soldier on left forearm |
| Committing Magistrates | Surname | Given Name | Title | Address | |
| | Applegate | F. | Esq. | Woolley Hill House, Bradford on Avon | |
| | Unknown | Unknown | | | |
| Name of Victim or Victims | | | | | |
| Surname | Given Names | Surname | Given Names | Surname | Given Names |
| Wills | John Henry | | | | |
| Date of Warrant | 1912 | 29-Jan | When Received into Custody | 1912 | 29-Jan |
| Details of Trial | | | | | |
| Date of Trial | 1912 | 09-Apr | Quarter Session Court | Salisbury | |
| Offence as Charged in the Commitment | | | | | |
| Feloniously did break and enter the warehouse of John Henry Wills, situate at Frankleigh, in the parish of Bradford Without, and therein feloniously did steal one suit of clothes, one fancy vest, two razors, and one shirt of the goods and chattels of the said John Henry Wills, on or about the 13th December 1911 | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------|--------------|---|-------------|
| Before Whom Tried | Surname | Given Names | Title | | |
| | Radcliffe | F. R. Y. | Esq., K.C. | | |
| Verdict of Jury | Confessed; Housebreaking after previous conviction | | | | |
| Particulars of Previous Convictions Charged in the Indictment and Proved in Court | County of Somerset Assizes, 6 June 1911 in name of Herbert Barry | | | | |
| Sentence or Order of the Court | 10 Calendar months Hard Labour | | | Prison to Which Sentenced | |
| | | | | Winchester | |
| Dates when Penal Servitude Ended or Supervision Commenced or Liberation | | | | | |
| Penal Servitude | | Supervision Commenced | | Liberation | |
| Year | Date | Year | Date | Year | Date |
| | | | | 1912 | 21-Dec |
| Intended Address on Release | Salisbury | | | Intended Occupation upon release | Fireman |
| Other Crimes Committed and Sentence Received | 14 Days Hard Labour, Frome Petty Sessions 23rd July 1901 (stealing provisions) | | | | |
| | Fined 5s. and costs, Frome Petty Sessions, 21 October 1901 (stealing turnips growing) | | | | |
| | 4 months hard labour Wells Quarter Sessions 15 October 1902 (stealing lead piping) | | | | |
| | 12 months hard labour Wells Assizes, 3rd June 1907 (burglary) | | | | |
| | 3 months hard labour Ebbw Vale Petty Sessions, 16 July 1908 (stealing clothing and 10s.) | | | | |
| | 2 months hard labour Bristol Police Court 23 February 1909 (assault police) as Herbert Berry | | | | |
| | 3 Months Hard labour; 3 months hard labour; 3 months hard labour; 3 months hard labour (concurrent) Bristol Police Court 19 April 1909 (stealing, 5 April 1911 (stealing sheets and shirts 4 charges) as Herbert Berry | | | | |
| | 2 months; 2 months; 2 months (concurrent) and 12 months Police Supervision, Gloster County Quarter Sessions 5 April 1911 (stealing coat, horse-hair, and a pair of riding boots) as Herbert Thompson | | | | |
| 7 months Somerset Assizes, 6 June 1911 (stealing a coat, waistcoat and trousers and 5s.) | | | | | |